



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	376/99
2. Advertiser	Freedom Furniture Ltd
3. Product	Housegoods/services
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Violence Other – section 2.2
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 7 December 1999
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The television advertisement commences with voiceover saying ‘The magistrate told us to halve everything’ as a man and woman are shown putting on goggles and starting up chainsaws. As they proceed to cut various items in half - a car, kitchen sink, a watch, walls and stairwell, voiceover continues ‘He told us it was 50/50. And although the whole divorce thing was fun, splitting the furniture was another matter. The man and woman are then shown to pause, apparently looking around for something else to cut in half. They notice a pet dog, which runs away yelping as they both chase it with their chainsaws. The advertisement concludes with voiceover saying ‘Think outside the square you live in’ and the Freedom Furniture logo.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments that the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

“We unfortunately live in a world where there are people who take information from television as being acceptable behaviour and ‘copycat’ acts are being increasingly reported. Therefore, there is a risk that someone out there will treat an animal in the manner implied by the ad.”

“How does one explain to children that the sad dog running away with people chasing it with chainsaws does not actually get hurt, especially when they can hear the cry of the dog as part of the image.”

“There is enough violence on TV without it being on our commercials as well.”

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (‘the Board’) considered whether this advertisement breached Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (‘the Code’).

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach the Code and would not offend prevailing community standards. It was noted that the actions of the man and woman were clearly fictitious and presented in the context of exaggerated humour. The Board, accordingly, dismissed the complaint.